

## MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTONNSA, Men Cons, Box 86,  
10/1/74

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

## PARTICIPANTS:

President Gerald R. Ford  
His Excellency Sheikh Mujibur Rahman,  
Prime Minister of Bangladesh  
Dr. Kamal Hossain, Foreign Minister  
Ambassador M. Hossain Ali  
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant  
to the President for National Security Affairs

## DATE AND TIME:

Tuesday - October 1, 1974  
3:00 p.m.

## PLACE:

The Oval Office  
The White House

[The press was admitted briefly for photos. There was a discussion of pipe tobacco and Mrs. Ford's condition. The press was ushered out.]

President: It was a shock to us. We had to make the decision for the operation, then wait for them to determine malignancy, and so forth.

Mujibur: I sincerely hope she is out of danger.

President: Yes, the prognosis cannot be certain, but only two nodes out of 30 were malignant.

It is good to have you here. It is the first time an American President has met with the head of state of Bangladesh.

Mujibur: Yes. I am happy to have the opportunity to talk with you about my people.

President: We are happy to do what we can for all countries.

Mujibur: You know the history of my country. Its condition after the war was likened to that of Germany in 1945. I want to thank you for your help to us. Before the war we were divided by India. The capital was all in

  
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the west. Bangladesh wasn't too bad in '47. Seventy percent of the representatives in the Parliament were from the West; I was in the Parliament. Most of the Administration was destroyed in the war or left for India. Even in the rest we couldn't get out of the West. Everyone has been suffering, first from the war, then from drought, then from the floods. Thanks to help from countries like you, no one is starving. We have had to import everything. Since then we started to bring our trade deficit down, until the inflation, drought and the floods came.

Bangladesh has resources. If we could control the floods, we could be self-sufficient in five years. We produce rice, jute, wheat, and tobacco. We have big gas deposits -- 10-20 trillion cubic feet. We were almost self-sufficient in fertilizer but our plants were damaged. With our own gas and fertilizer plants we could begin to export fertilizer, except for inflation.

President: We have been telling the OPEC countries that if their high prices result in the problems that you and the industrial countries are having, the high prices will bring a collapse and won't help them.

Mujibur: We are suffering so badly from the oil prices.


President: The OPEC countries must realize they are being shortsighted.

Mujibur: We are having a famine, and I have just heard that a cyclone is hitting. We are in dire straits. I have opened food kitchens in each of the regional areas to keep people from starving.

President: Wouldn't a Bangladesh Consortium to include some rich oil producers be a good thing? It would give them a chance to.....

Mujibur: Abu Dhabi and Iran have joined the Consortium. I have a crisis immediately, Mr. President, in grain and food aid.

President: There is 250,000 tons of food grains that are being made available for you. As we look at our food picture we will do what we can. We had hoped for a bigger crop. We had a wet spring and then a drought, and now an early frost. So our crop is disappointing. We must see what we have and we will do our very best with what we have.





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Mujibur: You are very kind. I hope, if I can make the flood control project with World Bank, we will be self-sufficient within five years. With our gas we hope for oil. We have signed contracts with Atlantic-Richfield and Union Oil. Eventually we can export. But that is in the future, and my crisis is immediate.

President: Do you work with the international lending institutions?

Mujibur: We are a member of the World Bank. Mr. McNamara visited Bangladesh just after our independence. Most of my mills are working now, but there are not enough materials and parts to go at capacity.

President: How about the price of jute?

Mujibur: It has only gone up 10-12%.


We won a majority in Pakistan. We are doing our best to be friends with them. Though millions were killed, or jailed or exiled, we want to forget. We released the Pakistani prisoners, including 195 war criminals. We think we should get some share of the old Pakistani assets. Yet I have had to take on the liabilities of the new country. Bhutto came to Dacca and I told him this, but so far nothing has happened. Also there are 700,000 non-Bengalees in my country. 400,000 want to stay in Bangladesh. That is fine. But Pakistan won't take the others who want to go there. I have to feed my people. How can I take care of my people when I have to take care of these?

I wanted to present these problems to you. I want good relations with everyone.

President: We congratulate you on your independence and UN membership. I was up there two weeks ago. I was encouraged with the improving attitude toward the UN. The American people in recent times have a better attitude towards the United Nations. I hope we can all work better in the United Nations. If it is just a debating society, it is no good. But we should use it to make it work.

Mujibur: We are grateful to you. We are a poor country but we want good relations with you.

President: What is the comparison between what used to be East and West Pakistan?



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Mujibur: Pakistan is 65 million. I am 75 million. Pakistan is larger than I. I am starting a family planning organization. We are having particular problems now. I am glad you know our problems. I want to survive.

President: The 150,000 tons [of wheat] is all set. The 100,000 is virtually assured and only depends on our supplies. We....

Mujibur: Would you consider edible oil and cotton? Our people are discussing with yours now.

President: We will do what we can.

Mujibur: Thank you. I officially invite you to visit Bangladesh.

President: Thank you. Isn't Secretary Kissinger going there?

Mujibur: Yes. On 30 October, but I want to invite you.